



And so you asked

By **Jon Hunt** • ATU Local 757 President

Six properties represented by this local will see their contracts expire in 2009. First up are Corvallis City Transit and Schools and Valley Transit Association at the end of June. Canby Area Transit reaches the end of their contract Sept. 30, followed in short order by MV Transportation, Salem Area Transit, and of course our largest property, TriMet.

Those of you with contracts expiring in the next six months should already have seen contract suggestion forms in the mail, and the rest of you will be seeing them soon as well. There's no need to wait until you receive your form in the mail, however. You can also go online to the ATU website at www.atu757.org. Click on the forms page, and submit as many contract proposals as you like, immediately. There is good news and bad news about negotiating contracts in a year like this one. The bad news is that I have experience in bargaining in a poor economy, and this one qualifies. All employers will be

asking for reductions. The good news is that I have experience bargaining in a poor economy and know that with unity and dedication we can ensure ourselves a solid contract.

As you know from your letters, I am also forming focus groups to ensure more members are involved. The purpose of these groups is to review the contract suggestions in their entirety and from them create a coherent, prioritized plan encompassing everyone's interests to present to the employer. While I've already heard from some members who are interested in participating in these groups, I want to see even more of you involved. It's essential to get the perspective of the rank and file, frontline employees in order for us to prioritize what is important to your locations. I can't emphasize enough how much I want to hear from all of you. I know it's easy to get sidetracked and hope that the vocal few will speak up on your behalf, but

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Union election notice

The schedule for the ATU 757 election is as follows:

April 20-26, 2009	Election Committee Selected
May 11, 2009	Nominations
June 5, 2009	Ballots Counted

Potential candidates wanting to be provided with election information as it becomes available should e-mail atu757election@gmail.com with that request or write to: 2009 Elections, 1801 NE Couch, Portland, OR 97232. Please read the *Bulletin* for more updates.

Officer Reports



TriMet Salaried Employees
As reported by
JIM FOWLER

As spring approaches, the elections for Union officers are drawing closer. We should start to see more and more candidates declare and begin to campaign for your votes. I urge all of you to take the time to find out as much as you can about those running for office. As salaried employees, all of us have important language that we would like to have added or changed in the upcoming contract, and we need to find candidates who will support our issues.

Due to a recent incident, I'm urging all salaried employees to be very careful when doing business on our recorded telephone lines. You never know when a manager may pull up a recording, and if there is something inappropriate on the tape, they will attempt to hand out severe discipline. It's real easy to forget that you're not just talking to an old friend, and say something that's not PC. Or worse, someone may call you and say something they shouldn't, and if you don't react properly you will still be in

trouble.

Our management team has announced that we may have to cut service and eliminate some bus routes in September due to the economic crisis. I'll bet they're glad they have the current crisis to blame our problems on when in fact poor fiscal decisions over the past 10 years have hurt us more than anything. It's nice that we can get federal funding for projects like the Yellow and Green lines, but if our funding sources don't allow us to properly run these projects once they're complete, then we shouldn't get involved in the first place. The Green line isn't even complete and they're already calling for service cuts there. Don't even get me started on this WES fiasco. We dumped millions into the rail cars to a failing company and a CEO making around \$38,000 a month. Folks, that's money that won't be there when we start negotiating our next contract.

Speaking of the next contract, you should all have received the letter and contract suggestion form sent by Jon Hunt. Please make copies of the form and send in your suggestions, and if you can, try to get on one of the focus groups for an issue you are concerned about. This next contract is extremely important to all of us, so please get involved.

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Secretary-Treasurer's Report

By **Evette Farra** • Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Hello to you all. Our CPA, Herman Lindsey, is VERY happy. We recently finished a six-month (July 1, 2008 – Dec. 31, 2008) audit of Local 757's finances in record time. Herman said that this audit is the earliest he's ever seen it done since he's been doing our books. Mr. Lindsey has been Local 757's auditor for over 20 years.

Our local's financial situation seems to be at a crossroads. We are out of the red and well into the black, so it is time to consider how to invest our money and allow it to generate some gains. Taking into consideration the projections for an unstable national economy, I feel it is best for us to be prudent with our

investments.

In my research I've found some very attractive CDs, with 3.20 percent and 3.40 percent returns on five-month and 10-month investments. CDs are considered safe, no risk, moderate yield investments with a locked-in fixed rate, and they seem to fit our needs perfectly. I will be meeting with financial consultants before presenting my findings to the Executive Board. Come to the union meetings or stop by my office if you have any questions or concerns. As always, I have an open door, open book policy and I'm here to answer all your questions regarding our local's finances.

union volunteers wanted

ATU member volunteers are needed to assist their fellow Union members. The opportunities are many: assist in training, Labor Community Services drive, membership mailings, and more. Please contact Catharine Alexander at 503-232-9144 to volunteer.

Amalgamated Transit Union - Division 757

Representing working men and women in Oregon and Washington at:

TriMet • Lane Transit District • Rogue Valley Transportation District • Portland Public Schools • Lamar Advertising Company (formerly Obie Media) • Valley Transit Association • Laidlaw Transit Services, Inc. (TriMet Lift, Portland) • American Medical Response Northwest (Josephine County) • Laidlaw Transit, Inc. (Portland Public Schools, Corvallis School District, Corvallis City Transit) • MV Transportation, Inc. • C-TRAN/C-VAN • Salem Area Transit • WHEELS • Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, Inc. • Tillamook County Transportation District • ATU Retired Member Chapter



What IS this?

The four outside pages are news from and about your Union. The other pages are produced by the Northwest Labor Press, and are about the labor movement as a whole.

March Meetings

Charter

Charter members meet 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 16, at the Salvation Army, Rose Center for Seniors, 211 NE 18th Ave, Portland (18th & Sandy Blvd, adjacent to the ATU office.) Charter day members meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 17, at Schoppert Hall, 1801 NE Couch, Portland.

Salem Transit/WHEELS

Salem members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 17, at the West Salem Branch Public Library 395 Glen Creek Road, Salem.

Lane Transit

Eugene members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 18, and Eugene day members meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 19, at the Woodworkers Local Lodge, 1124 South A St., Springfield.

Corvallis Laidlaw City Transit/Schools

Corvallis members meet 7:45 p.m. Thursday March 19, at Woodstock Pizza, 1045 NW Kings Blvd, Corvallis

Rogue Valley Transportation

Medford members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 19, at the Hampton Inn, 1122 Morrow Rd., Medford.

Portland and Laidlaw School Bus Drivers

Portland School Bus members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 19, at Rigler School, 5401 NE Prescott, Portland

C-TRAN/C-VAN

Vancouver members meet 7 p.m. Sunday, March 22, at the Laborers Hall, 2121 NE Andresen, Vancouver, Washington.

Tillamook County Transportation District

Tillamook members meet 1 p.m. Sunday, March 22, at 212 Main Street, next door to Beach Pancake House in Tillamook.

AMR Northwest Josephine County, LAMAR Advertising and Valley Transit

See your liaison officers.

PLEASE NOTE: ATU members are invited to attend any of the above-listed meetings.

Hunt

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we gather our strength and power from our numbers. We will be forming these groups soon. It is not too late to put your name in. Contact Catharine at the union office at 503-232-9144 if you are interested.

Liaison Officer Kathleen Brown and I recently attended a conference in Washington, D.C., about ATU's approach to MV Transportation. Increasingly, MV Transportation's behavior towards unions has raised concerns across the United States and Canada. ATU International president Warren George convened this series of meetings among rank and file drivers, local union officials, and international vice presidents

to share information and discuss possible new approaches for the ATU. I see this process working at some of our other groups such as First Transit/First Student, where other unions are working together to address issues before they become enormous problems.

I also attended a maintenance conference. Topics of discussion were contracting out, health and safety, and steward training. I will be incorporating some of this in our own upcoming officer/steward training. If you were thinking of getting more involved in the union, now would be a great time. There are tons of opportunities. Contact your officers for more information.

Retirees' Corner

The following retirees will celebrate birthdays in March: Dannie L. Adamson; Brunhilde Aplin; Green Asberry; Cindi L. Attaway; Steven W. Bardell; Tommie L. Boyd; Harold E. Buschke; William J. Carstens; Helen M. Castro; Ronald R. Castro; Homer E. Cornwell; Marilyn I. Cote; Jacques E. Craner; Rudolph Cunningham; Edward A. Dahl; Delbert O. Desper; Andrea Dobson; Donald R. Elix; Anne M. Frost; Jack M. Goetz; Harold M. Guy; James H. Hall; Gerald W. Hartung; Jay L. Hiatt; James H. Holzman; Phyllis Johnstone; Gail R. Jones; Susan L. Kassebaum; James E. Kelly; Judith A. Kimmerling; Albert M. Klingler; David B. Koepping; David F. Kramer; Ira L.

Leeson; George O. Lepsey; Dwight L. Lind; Phillip A. Maggs; Artha E. Malone; Everett M. Martin; Darrel A. McChesney; John P. McClinck; Jon A. McWilliams; Larry L. Morgan; Jane M. Redinger; David A. Santeford; Roger L. Sellon; French E. Smith Jr.; Harold F. Snider; Larry L. Teters; Alfred D. Thomas; Marcella M. Tillman; Warren W. Webber; Stephen J. Widmer; Thelma E. Wight; Debra A. Williams; Sylvia A. Wilson

Next month's regularly scheduled ATU 757 Retired Member Chapter meeting is Wednesday, April 2, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. at Westmoreland's Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave. Coffee and doughnuts will be served at 9 a.m.

ATU Local 757 Officers

President-Business Representative.....JONATHAN HUNT
 Vice President-Assistant Business Representative.....SAM SCHWARZ
 Financial Secretary-Treasurer/Recording Secretary.....EVETTE FARRA

Executive Board Officers

TriMet Center Maintenance.....CHAD MATHER
 TriMet Center Transportation.....SANDY GUENGERICH
 TriMet Powell MaintenanceDAVID KAY
 TriMet Powell TransportationROSE JORDAN
 TriMet Merlo Maintenance.....JEFF HUNT
 TriMet Merlo TransportationBRUCE HANSEN
 TriMet LRT MaintenanceMIKE CONNER
 TriMet LRT Transportation.....MICHAEL T. OLIVER
 TriMet Monthly Rated Employees.....JIM FOWLER
 Lane Transit District (LTD).....BRIAN PASQUALI
 Portland Public SchoolsRANDY SHAW
 First StudentANNA TOMPTE
 C-TRAN.....ROY JENNINGS
 Salem Area Mass Transit District.....KEN RICHINS

Liaison Officers

TriMet Merlo Extra BoardSTEVE ECKLES
 TriMet Center Extra BoardCHRIS DAY
 TriMet Powell Extra Board.....KHRIS ALEXANDER
 TriMet Ruby JunctionDOUG "SPUD" HENDERSON
 TriMet Ruby Junction MaintenanceJOE RUFFIN III
 TriMet ElmonicaC.J. HENDERSON
 TriMet Elmonica Maintenance..... VACANT
 SAT Maintenance.....DON ELZNIC
 LTD Chairman.....DEB BITTERLICH
 LTD SecretaryTOM SHACKELFORD
 LTD Maintenance.....LEE LASSE
 LTD Extra BoardOPEN POSITION
 Rogue Valley Transportation DistrictTHOMAS HENNEY
 Valley Transit.....NICK NOTARAS
 AMR Southern Oregon-Josephine County TRAVIS HAMLYN
 First Student (Portland School Bus)DANIEL OTTO
 First Transit (TriMet Lift)LES GREEN
 Laidlaw (Corvallis City Transit)BOB MCGUIRE
 Laidlaw Education Services (Corvallis Schools)CHRIS GROOMS
 MV Transportation, Inc.....DENNIS TONG
 C-TRAN.....SCOTT MILLER
 C-VANJIM COLLELL
 WHEELS.....JOHN HARVEY
 Tillamook Cnty. Trans. Dist.....PATRICIA OSTRANDER-NICE

ATU Local 757 Officer Reports

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TriMet Light Rail Transportation
As reported by
MICHAEL T. OLIVER

“There will be no refuge for anyone in the present economic crisis.” I heard that comment on the news one evening, and it caused me to re-think LROs and the current situation. I was thinking that because of the Green Line opening up that TriMet could ill afford to lay any of us off, but now I’m not so sure. If the budget for 2010 is going to lose \$13.5 million, then the cuts should be across the board, with no one left untouched. Just what that means to light rail I can only speculate at this point, but be ready for anything. According to the WWA, page 28, para 2 and 3, if you are laid off from light rail, then you claim your bus seniority. If you get laid off from there you go to the unemployment line. You hear the propaganda all the time: Spend your money and this recession/depression will be over soon enough. Enough of that. Save your money and cut down on your expenditures. This will be a tough time for all. Don’t fall for any get rich quick schemes. If it seems too good to be true, it is. Good luck to all.

Do not SPEED on the job. You could lose it. Think about it, you leave Ruby late EB. You can pick up 90 seconds by going 50 mph through the cut, but you get caught at the Civic Center. Because you had been caught three months before, you get a one-day suspension. Get it? It does not add up, so don’t do it. A couple of seconds is not worth a day’s pay in the present economic crisis.

This has been a busy month for the intersection at Holliday/Grand. Approaching this one from the west, all the LRO need see is a car in the left-hand turn lane. Nothing else, no turn signal, not two cars, just one in that lane should bring your awareness to its highest and you should say to yourself, “that car is going to run the red light.” They often do is my thought, and we should be prepared. There is a reason that intersection is our number one incident/accident spot, and it is because so many POVs disregard the signal. Knowing that that info is a given then, we should always be prepared on that section. If it’s in our ROW we will hit it. If we are prepared we will stop.

We lost three of our finest: Janice Reddaway, Elizabeth Hawkins and Eddie West are now controllers, and we wish them the best and congrats to them in their promotions.

The Saturday Market reopens Feb. 28 at a much larger site. They have moved to the Waterfront Park, where 260 vendors will serve all your needs, and good luck to them. “There is a Santa, Virginia.” Thanks so much for all the checks, but this month I would prefer cash. As always, mail me at mtgbo2002@msn.com



TriMet Light Rail Maintenance
As reported by
MICHAEL CONNER

As TriMet management is skewered over and over by the public for its failed fare collection system at Rail, someone had the idea that they should maybe come to the folks who probably have the most expertise and finally involve them in the process of trying to come up with a solution. The Union was approached by Steve Banta with an idea to combine the communication techs and fare techs from two separate journeyman classifications into one classification. Long story, short story, Banta is trying to take a simplistic solution and apply it to a complicated problem. Whether this will work or not will depend on whether he takes seriously the discussions or was just giving the employees lip service to get the deal he wanted. We did get significant wage improvements for the fare techs and apprentices, an expanded training program, a lump sum payment for the communication techs and an additional assistant supervisor bargaining unit member position.

Welcome all to the new field technician positions. Special thanks to Jon Hunt, shop steward Doug Baton, Center maintenance E-board officer Chad Mather and communication technician Jeff Hunger for all their efforts in this task. Hopefully TriMet will live up to its part of the deal and we will see some improvement in our public perception on fare compliance.

In Maintenance of Way, with signups approaching, I would have liked to see the addition and restoration of assistant supervisor jobs where we have had discussion on the issue. I guess as long as the operation keeps running as smoothly as it is, though, the District sees no need to make that change after reviewing the signup proposals. In the Rail vehicle shop, the battle continues over apprentice misuse and production issues. Even though district management continues to cut corners with its observance of collective bargaining rights, the backlog of preventative maintenance continues to grow in that area.

As for WES startup, we will see how it goes. But something to watch out for is the short line operator who is the contractor for TriMet operating WES. They have taken an interest in starting another of these operations for TriMet on the antiquated tracks between Forest Grove and Hillsboro. I do hope we do not end up with that happening, as Portland & Western Railway looks to make another raid on the TriMet treasury to improve its plant so we can watch contracted employees doing more of our maintenance and operators’ work. We need to watch this one, as it looks like Portland & Western Railroad wants to be a power player for work that rightfully belongs to us.

With Local Union elections fast approaching, remember that our union is only as strong as its members’ involvement. This is a great time to help have a say in your future, in your career. I have found my job helping you the members to be one of the most rewarding things I have done. Get involved and have your voice be heard!

Lane Transit District
As reported by
BRIAN PASQUALI

Now that the information has been compiled for the retirement incentive packages, we will be moving on to the next step, which will be a meeting to which those who are eligible are invited. Then comes the offer. After that, it’s a matter of the individual and their choice. I encourage all who know someone in the position of retiring to allow this process to occur naturally. The choice is theirs and theirs alone to make.

As the economic stimulus bill was moved forward, the news of just how much the District is to acquire is not yet known. However, at the time this article was typed, the prediction was roughly \$6 million, and the general consensus of those directly involved with the process is that this could dramatically reduce the threat of service cuts. Couple that with the likelihood that the incentive packages will move some to retire and well ... let’s just say we’re looking better than we were.

One would think with the way the District is still running through cash that there is no problem. Because while vital service is being cut and the threat of layoffs hasn’t faded, the District still finds the money to mark off roughly 15 instructors for a day to do scavenger hunts and role playing. And that’s only one example, one that I recently took issue with. The answer is always the same: “this was budgeted last year” or “the funds were dedicated solely for ... this or that, yada yada.” Somehow this seems to indemnify whoever the department head is from scrutiny. You will never see one department head question another’s budget because they do not want anyone snooping through their departmental expenditures in return. It really is a perfect system for fiscal irresponsibility.

Being we are facing down some increasing difficult issues I would like to remind many of you that your participation is greatly appreciated. I encourage any of you who haven’t made a union meeting recently to revisit the idea. The idea is that you are the Union. Your local leadership is your muscle and your mouthpiece, and while we are here to serve you, we need your participation.

MV Transportation
As reported by
KATHLEEN BROWN

Hello, everyone! Spring is in the air, and the bad weather has passed.

Moving on to the issues with the ATU grievances filed concurrent with snow days. We have reached an agreement with management to place the attendance points accrued in abeyance. This means that the points may not be used towards termination.

There is an ongoing problem with route reductions. Read the MOU carefully, as there is language in the agreement stating that if your route is trimmed you must request compensa-

tory work within the pay period. There is a form. If Window Dispatch offers you this work and you refuse the work, it is difficult to grieve. Please take your breaks, and if there is an issue with your schedule, notify Dispatch before you go out on the road that there is a problem. If this is an ongoing problem, let Cindy Russell and I know that there is a problem so we can address the issue.

Recently I handed out flyers containing information about a conference attended by Jon Hunt and myself, as well as contract suggestion forms. If you did not receive a form, leave a note in my box, #23. Please review our contract and find segments that you would like to see modified. There is no deadline set at this time for submitting your suggestions. However, it is better to be prepared early, as the contract is a very complicated document. Remember: We are your union, and your input is valuable.

Rumors always surface during contract negotiations, so I leave you with this food for thought: False words no matter how eloquently expressed, remain untruths. Until next issue!

TriMet Center Transportation
As reported by
SANDY GUENGERICH

So, there are lots of rumors that there are going to be layoffs. Everyone out there at Center: Stay positive. I know I have not heard anything. The only thing I have heard about the contract is that suggestion forms have been sent out and something about focus groups to help determine what people want to see in the next contract. Remember to make copies of the form if you have more than one suggestion, or go to the Union’s web site and submit your suggestions online. And remember that it is about all of our brothers and sisters.

Next thing I want to bring up is that you probably have heard on the news that Americans have lost over 586,000 jobs in one month. Plants are closing across the nation. Jobs are few and far between. People are losing their homes. You ask how we can help in these hard times. I know one small thing we can all do is stop shopping at non-union stores. Remember that when you shop at a union store you help keep people’s jobs who have worked hard to have a fair wage agreement. Start taking the time to keep other union jobs strong. I know some of us have come from non-union jobs, but that is why we left and came here — for a better life for all Americans. So when you’re out driving that bus, give the passengers a smile and remember that they might have lost their job.

On Feb. 4, I was at Center Street garage to show people the new bathroom break form. We are trying to gather information so we can make changes for the next contract.

Last thing that has come to my attention: You must have your union dues current to vote in the election and on your next contract. Some of you might need to pay out-of-work dues. You don’t want to have a larger bill. Have any questions, call me at 503-729-8958.

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ATU Local 757 Officer Reports

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C-TRAN

As reported by
SCOTT MILLER

When C-TRAN decided to install the INIT system (GPS), it was agreed to by both the Union and C-TRAN that the GPS could not be used for discipline. It looks like C-TRAN is, in a roundabout way, trying to use the GPS for discipline. It looks as if C-TRAN is taking the information they receive on their computer screen to see if an operator is running hot. Then, they will call that operator and try to get that operator to confess to being ahead of schedule. C-TRAN now uses that operator's confession to discipline them. It looks like this is how C-TRAN is trying to get around the agreement that they have with the Union.

If C-TRAN calls you on the radio (or talks to you in person) about your location, what time you have, and/or your next time point, they are doing an investigation. When you are in an investigation and you feel that what you say may lead to you being disciplined, you need to invoke your Weingarten Rights. What this means is that you need to tell C-TRAN (over the radio while driving the bus) that you want your Union Representative. This is your right. Use it.

After much discussion in January (unless it changes again), our upcoming Union meetings will be on March 15, April 26, May 17, June 28 and July 26. The rest are to be figured out. Please mark your calendar and make sure you attend.

Before you go to anyone with an open door policy, please talk to your union officer first! Our next Union meeting is this Sunday, March 22.



Portland Public Schools

As reported by
RANDY SHAW

One of my duties as your Union Officer is to be a go-between for the driver and management to work out problems as they come up. I know as a driver I went to management with a problem without consulting my Union Rep, as some of you have, and it worked out okay. After being burnt a couple of times, I always talked it over with my rep before we did anything.

The District has rules and regulations just like any big corporation. We may not like them, and they may not seem fair at times, but that is why we have a contract and a Union to uphold the contract. Not everything is covered under a contract. That's why you need a third party to go to management when concerns come up that are not covered. Are we always going to come up with a favorable decision? No, but that does not mean we did not try. We

are all human and think our problem is bigger or more important than that of any other driver, and we want to be heard. We want something done about it, and we want it now. We do not stop and think, with my Union Rep helping me, it may hurt the rest of the drivers. The Union may let one driver down, by protecting the majority of the drivers.

When I was on staff, I always referred to PPS drivers as family. You may not like a family member, but you always help them if they needed it. That is what the Union is: a family. As our President Jon Hunt is always reminding us, it takes all of us working together to make our union work. Therefore, if you have a problem or concerns do not keep it to yourself. Ask someone for help. Do not wait to call on me. If you need help, as the old saying goes: it may be too late to lock the gate after the horse got out. I'll still put on my cowboy boots and go to work, I'll just get more done if you remember to lock the gate or call me first, okay?



TriMet Powell

As reported by
ROSE JORDAN

As you are all aware, I missed last month's report, so I have a lot of catching up to do. Last month I spent many days and hours at Center Street doing what we call sign-up. For the most part, things went smoothly, except that some operators never filled out request slips, which made it difficult to sign them their work. So operators, please take the time to plan your work. Because it's your life for three months, or 12 weeks.

There have been lots of rumors floating around about what will be on the table for our next contract. But, as you know, times are getting harder economically and the District will use that. So keep that in mind as you will start to hear very negative things. My question to all of you is, "How are you planning your future?" Keep a positive attitude about upcoming events. The union is trying hard to keep every one of us abreast of new changes, but we must all do our part.

A small note on Center Street garage: The Union and I have been successful in helping a few mini-runners secure their jobs after being terminated, and I'm very proud of the working relationship I have established at Center. Sandra and I are working closely to make sure all Center Street operators' needs are being met. Don't hesitate to call me if you have problems or questions.

Just a reminder to look out for postings about the ATU 757 Saturday Drivers' Caucus. They are very informational and attendance is growing. Jon Hunt, ATU 757 president, has attended past sessions to answer questions, and I anticipate seeing him at future meetings as his schedule permits. Hope to see you at upcoming caucuses!



First Transit TriMet Lift

As reported by
LES GREEN

Well, this has been one month I do not want repeated for a very long time. First Transit Lift has lost two drivers, and two others are not far behind. This only proves that by letting the impossible manifest run your route instead of safety and responsibility, your driving job will be put in jeopardy every time.

We have many requirements as paratransit drivers, and not following the rules and regulations of the road along with focusing on safety for yourself and your passengers we will not get very far. This is a poor time to lose a job that most of us love and enjoy.

Enough preaching, as another problem is rearing its ugly head again – the time for bathroom and regular breaks. I have been informed by many drivers this past month that scheduling and dispatch have turned a deaf ear on our tight schedules and the fact that we do not have an empty bus for four or five hour stretches. I do want copies of these examples, as they are breaking Oregon labor law and getting away with it. I have always said that we should ask Nela to lock the bathrooms at their offices for eight hours and see how they like it. We, as drivers, must report these violations in order to clamp down on a system that treats us, along with our passengers, more like machinery than human beings with human needs. Manifests must not all be computer-driven just for the almighty dollar, but must be mixed so as to take into account the needs of the people who make the service possible, or we will lose more drivers to health and safety issues. Without experienced drivers the system (Lifeline) will fail and all the jobs — management, scheduling, dispatch and drivers — will bear the loss as well as the revenue lost for TriMet.

Enough for now. Will try to stay off my soapbox for next month's article.



TriMet Merlo Maintenance

As reported by
JEFF HUNT

We had two new pre-filings this month at WES. They were short of mechanics and had light rail mechanics come in to work on the train out of seniority. They should have gone by journeyman seniority. I believe TriMet has seen the error of their ways and this should be settled soon.

Also at WES, management will not allow people to use their floating holidays. We do have clear contract language stating that vacation and floating holidays are separate, but I believe this one will need to move on to become a grievance.

I have filed three grievances this month. Two of them are very similar, concerning fabrication work being done at Powell rather than Merlo. One is about seat frames and one is about cabinet frames. It is a clear violation of our seniority rights when someone does our work that we bid.

The third grievance is about the mistreatment of the graveyard crew at Merlo. The supervisor has made some improvements in how he treats his crew but the hangup is workforce development, who seem to be under the impression that it is not something that cannot be grieved. This will be moving forward as well.

Remember to write out your contract proposals and send them in, or you can go to www.atu757.org and fill the form out online. Your contribution can and will make a difference.



VP's Report

By Sam Schwarz • ATU Local 757 Vice President

A report I read recently on a study that was done by the University of Michigan shows that diesel engine exhaust emits countless nanoparticles of carbon into the air and get trapped in the lungs and inhibit breathing functions. These slip through both filters and government regulations. Other studies show how these nanoparticles, when trapped in the lungs, can lead to inflammation, blood clotting and changes in breathing and heart rate.

At MV Transportation Kathy Brown and I settled several grievances and will keep the members informed of all goings on.

At Tri Met we have settled several grievances and are working on arbitrations and

mediations once again.

In Corvallis we have serious scheduling problems involving the CTS drivers not getting their breaks.

I will keep everyone at First Student informed about the ongoing contract violations and the outcome of the grievances.

Contract negotiations continue to go slow in Salem at Wheels.

I would like to thank everyone who has furnished me with information at the different properties in helping fight grievances.

Congratulations to recent retirees Max and Kurt David and Garry Nelson. And welcome to all newly hired.